SPECIAL ISSUE CALL FOR PAPERS

**Learning and transfer in organizations: How it works and can be supported**

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Organizations and their employees need to learn continuously to adapt to market changes, as well as to societal and technological advancements (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016; Kraiger & Ford, 2021). Alongside these external forces, learning in organizations has undergone some shifts over the last decades regarding which learning approaches best reflects the current needs of the organization (Noe et al., 2014). The development of competence through alternating qualification and application phases could be designed efficiently as long as stable processes and manageable information dominated in organizations. In the 1990s, the formerly separate application and qualification periods were coupled more closely, so that the efficiency of this approach declined as a result of more short-lived corporate processes and information overflow. As a result, continuing education was considered too slow and chronically delayed and could not meet the actual need (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). The vision of the 1990s was to combine learning and application and is reflected in the concept of competence, which emphasizes the successful processing of mainly novel tasks at work. This form of work-integrated and informal learning was (and is) a response to the growth of adaptive processes and the handling of situationally appropriate information in companies, as well as their promotion and enabling (Kauffeld, 2016; Cerasoli et al., 2018; Decius et al., 2021). In times when disruptive technologies require new processes, work-integrated learning should be fostered again by external input to drive innovation and develop the organization. At the same time, embedding and linking knowledge into the organization is important to meet the requirements. This can be achieved by enabling employees to benefit from external expert knowledge (e.g., from universities or research institutes) and to apply it in their organization (e.g., Hilkenmeier et al., 2021). The aim is to make a sustainable contribution to the development of the organization through the learning of the individual.

Employees are on individual learning paths with individual learning goals and topics for which they need to build and maintain a motivation to change and learn. Formal, informal, and self-regulated learning opportunities are interrelated throughout individuals’ learning paths, which take place in the described social and organizational context (Decius et al., 2022; Poell, 2017; Richter et al., 2020). In terms of work-related learning, the three learning approaches of formal, informal, and self-regulated learning must be distinguished. Formal learning is highly structured learning in terms of learning location, learning time, and learning support (e.g., training and education; Kyndt & Baert, 2013). However, only 10 to 15% of what is learned in training is transferred to the work context by training participants (Ford et al., 2018). Informal learning involves learning which is directly integrated into the work process and often used for problem solving and occurs through own trial and error, feedback, and reflection (Cerasoli et al, 2018; Tannenbaum et al, 2010). Self-regulated learning is characterized by the learner setting their own learning goals and independently observing and monitoring the learning process (Sitzmann & Ely, 2011)—in contrast to informal learning, the focus here is on the learning intention rather than on the work-integrated problem-solving intention.

Continuing education, including formal learning, is often not only chronically delayed but is also not considered particularly effective in terms of transfer. The transfer of what is learned into the everyday work context depends on factors of the participant (e.g., transfer motivation and volition), on the training (e.g., transfer design, work-training congruence, training atmosphere), and on the work environment. Factors in the work environment are primarily responsible for whether or not the transfer into everyday work succeeds (Massenberg et al., 2017). Support from colleagues and supervisors, the possibility of applying knowledge, time resources, or feedback are relevant factors (e.g., Richter & Kauffeld, 2021). Therefore, it is important to design the learning transfer system and, in particular the organizational working environment, the learning network in the run-up to and during a training measure and thus to create conditions that enable the transfer.

The application of training content has an impact on the work environment, colleagues, and managers.

With this special issue, we aim to strongly advance scientific knowledge on learning and transfer in organizations. Research questions could include, but are certainly not limited to:

* How can different learning approaches—especially formal, self-regulated, and informal learning—be integrated for learning in organizations?
* How do different learning approaches interact with each other to explain learning outcomes?
* What is the unique contribution of different learning approaches on learning outcomes?
* How can employees be developed so that organizations can initiate and implement change?
* What factors influence the transfer of learning and learning outcomes (e.g., knowledge, skills)?
* How can social networks support work-related learning and learning transfer in the organization?
* What factors influence people's learning networks and their impact on change in the organization
* How is individual learning connected to organizational learning?
* How does digitalization changes work-related learning (e.g., frequency, duration, or selection of learning approaches) and learning transfer?

We welcome papers which make a substantial empirical contribution to understanding how effective learning in organizations works. Submitted papers should explicitly focus on learning outcomes and the processes that lead to the corresponding outcome. Papers that link two of the three levels—individual, team, and organization—are particularly welcome. In addition, papers that combine and connect different learning approaches are of particular interest. Papers also may examine different target groups (e.g., personal and organizational factors as boundary conditions). Methodologically, this includes original empirical papers, meta-analyses, and systematic literature reviews, as well as mixed-method studies.

**Submission instructions:**

Manuscripts should be submitted by 01.05.2023 through the journal’s online submissions system via http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/pewo, as a submission for this Special Issue. Please note that the regular author guidelines of EJWOP apply. For details, please visit: https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?show=instructions&journalCode=pew  
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Questions about this special issue can be directed to the special issue guest co-editors: Simone Kauffeld (kauffeld@tu-braunschweig.de), Julian Decius (julian.decius@uni-bremen.de), or Carolin Graßmann ([carolin.grassmann@victoria-hochschule.de](mailto:carolin.grassmann@victoria-hochschule.de)). We strongly encourage interested authors to submit a brief abstract (1,000 words maximum, excluding references) of their intended submission. This will allow the Guest Editors to offer preliminary feedback about the potential fit with the special issue and suggestions for potentially improving the fit and scope of the intended study.

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**Guest editors**

Simone Kauffeld is a professor of Work, Organizational and Social Psychology at the Technical University of Braunschweig, Germany since 2007. She received her PhD in Work and Organizational Psychology from University of Kassel, Germany. She worked as consultant in the automotive industry, as a visiting researcher at the City University of New York, US, and as a professor in Northwestern Switzerland. In her research she deals with the topics of competence development and management (training and transfer), team and leadership, career/coaching and changes in organization and work. She publishes her research in international journals (e.g., Journal of Vocational Behavior, Journal of Applied Psychology, European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, The Leadership Quarterly, Small Group Research, Higher Education). Her work was honored with several best paper awards. As editor she has relaunched the journals "PersonalQUARTERLY" (in 2013) and "Group - Interaction - Organization" (in 2016) and is responsible for 1 to 3 issues each year. In 2019, she joined the editorial board of the Organizational Psychology section of Frontiers in Psychology as an associate editor. She also served as ad hoc editor for special issues (e.g., EJWOP). She publishes various books (e.g., Career and Career Management, Innovative Teaching) as well as book series on industrial and organizational psychology (e.g., Competence Management in Organizations; Industrial, Organizational and Business Psychology).

Julian Decius is the head of the unit *Organizational Psychology* in the Faculty of Business Studies and Economics at University of Bremen, Germany, where he holds a tenure-track position. He received his PhD in Work and Organizational Psychology from Paderborn University, Germany, for his research on informal workplace learning of blue-collar workers. As a visiting researcher he worked at the University of East Anglia (Norwich), the University of Antwerp and the University of Maastricht. His research interests are on learning and development in the workplace and in higher education, strategic competence development in small and medium-sized enterprises, new work and new learning, job crafting, employability, algorithmic management of gig workers, and soccer players' development. His research is published in international journals (e.g., Human Resource Development Quarterly, The Journal of Technology Transfer, Vocations & Learning, Leadership & Organization Development Journal, Active Learning in Higher Education). He also organizes symposia at international conferences (e.g., EAWOP, ICP).

Carolin Graßmann is a professor of Business Psychology with focus on Organization Development and Business Coaching at VICTORIA International University of Applied Sciences, Berlin, Germany. She received her PhD in Work and Organizational Psychology from University of Kassel, Germany. She is passionate about how people learn and develop in organizations and how best to support them. Her main research focuses on the effects and processes of learning in the workplace, especially coaching and training, as well as women and parents in leadership positions. She recently co-organized (together with Silja Kotte and Gil Bozer) the EAWOP Small Group Meeting on workplace coaching. Her work has appeared in Human Relations and Human Resource Development Review, amongst others, and was honored with the 2021 Best Coaching Paper of the Year Award.